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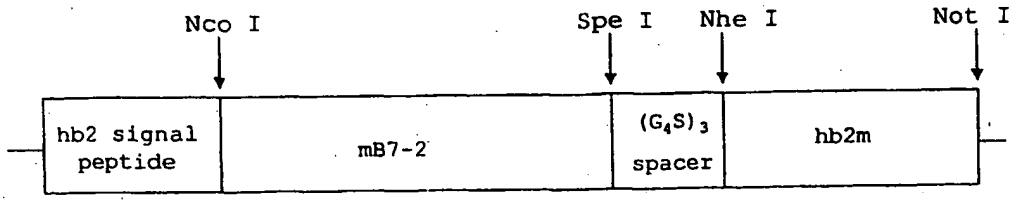
(54) Title: β_2 MICROGLOBULIN FUSION PROTEINS AND HIGH AFFINITY VARIANTS



(57) Abstract

β_2-microglobulin fusion proteins and modified forms of β_2-microglobulin are disclosed. The fusion proteins are shown to incorporate onto the surface of MHC I expressing mammalian cells and to cause an increased cytotoxic T-cell response to antigens presented by such cells. The fusion proteins are useful in methods of tumor therapy. Modified forms of human β_2-microglobulin, particularly a form having a serine to valine transition at amino acid position 55 of the mature protein are shown to have an enhanced affinity for MHC I heavy chain, and are useful both in the disclosed fusion proteins and as a vaccine adjuvant where enhanced cytotoxic T-cell response is desired.